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CIVIC CENTER ADVOCATE IN REPLY TO MASS MEETING TALK

Arguments Taken Up [and Answered—Writer Says Irwin Site Speakers] Were Refused Time.

(From Sunday's Advertiser.)

THE SPEECH THAT WASN'T DELIVERED AT THE CIVIC FEDERATION MEETING: WITH A FEW REMARKS ON OUR BRETHREN WHO ARE ORGANIZED TO TEACH "CIVIC RIGHTNESS" AND "CLEAN POLITICS."

Mr. Editor:—The Civic Federation in its public meeting of Thursday afternoon provided no speaker to represent the respectable, and significantly large, number of petitioners for the adoption of a federal building site in the Palace (or Government) Square; while, of the four speakers provided, two were strongly partisan, scoundrels in the cause of the Mahuka site, another dealt in a very general and inconclusive way with the desirability of a "civic center," and the remaining speaker, as our federal Delegate, confined his remarks, and very properly, to the assurance that as our representative in congress he stood ready to carry out the will of the people, and to an appeal to them to "get together" whatever they do. In passing, the speech of Kubio is worthy of special attention, for its common sense, its directness, its clearness, its forcefulness, and its fairness. It stood out distinctly as the best speech that was made, and, in their way, the speeches were all good. Kubio in a humorous and forceful manner chided our people for their indecision—the people who seem now to have come around to what was originally Kubio's own way of thinking as to the best site for the federal building. Kubio was only ahead of his time, that is all, the people have now caught up with him, having slowly come to appreciate his foresight, and the foresight also of Judge Dole, Governor Frear and Governor Carter.

A Legal Argument.

Mr. Castle's speech was the speech of an able lawyer addressing a jury: it was interesting, forcible, but it was a partisan speech, nevertheless, made up, to a considerable extent, of observations beside the mark, and to a considerable extent unfair. The writer will, with your kind indulgence, make a "running" discussion of the speaker's points in their order, the comments here being by way of suggestion rather than of extended argument. The fact that "the community took up the subject very earnestly some time ago," is true enough, but does not prove the wisdom of what was then done. And it is important to note that the action was that of "some time ago." Honolulu and Honolulu's outlook have vastly changed since then. The fact that at a public meeting which was "representative," then held, no votes were cast against the Mahuka site, may be true; but would not prove that we were not then wrong, or that if we were right, the conditions and prospects do not now warrant a change.

Do Not "Own the Town."

That certain liberal, public-spirited gentlemen gave \$35,000 to make the Mahuka site possible, is worthy of consideration; and, whatever be done, they should be equitably dealt with, and compensated. But if subsequent conditions make a different site desirable, these gentlemen will prove that they are still liberal, and still public-spirited, by showing that they do not pretend to "own the town" by reason of a former public-spirit and liberality. They will be fairly dealt with, every one wants them to be. We may here apply to these public-spirited citizens the argument applied by Mr. Castle to the case of E. O. Hall & Son and the Fort Street merchants, when he said, it is hard for them to lose their property, but "they have to yield to what is necessary."

"The Mahuka site is by all odds the most convenient location for all business concerned," is "nearer to all classes who wish to use" the building proposed. This is Mr. Castle's fundamental point, and the only one worthy of attention as an argument directed to the issue.

In support of this point, the speaker urged the heavy aggregate loss of time to the business men by bad location of the Palace Square site, saying that these men would dislike sending their messengers to a postoffice ten minutes away when a location could be had only five minutes distant. Now, who are the men to whom the location of the federal building on the Irwin site in Palace Square rather than on the Mahuka site on Bishop street, would make any difference? And how many are they? It must, also, be considered, by the way, that there is some offset in the fact that the Irwin site would be more convenient for a number of business men. This offset would not be large at present, but indications are that it is going to be considerable; and among the women, of whose convenience the speaker made a point, and with reference to the growing residence section of the city and suburbs, the offset of those who would be inconvenienced by a location in Palace Square, would be overwhelming.

However, there really is not much to this point of centrality, for the Irwin site is hardly more than a minute's walk farther (each way, or two minutes both ways), and when haste is necessary it is nothing to a messenger on a bicycle or a man in a hack or automobile. So far as mails are concerned, "eleventh-hour" letters are always sent to the steamers directly and mailed on board. In urging this heavy

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loss of time, he might have considered as an offset the heavy loss of time and expense in the disturbance of the work of the federal court, trial juries and grand juries, and of hearings before the United States commissioner, by reason of the noise of street cars on Fort and King streets and heavy traffic there, and on Merchant and Bishop streets, which, with the growth of the city, the more frequent passing of cars and the opening of Bishop street directly to the waterfront, will be even greater than it is now.

Court House Importance.

And, by the way, the speaker in detailing the uses of the federal building invariably referred to its use by the people as a postoffice, customhouse and internal revenue office, without once mentioning its use as a courthouse. Now, no one will deny that the postoffice business of the building will be many times the business of all other departments put together; but the business of the court, United States marshal, district attorney and court clerk is, so far as the people at large are concerned, greatly in excess of that of any other department except the postoffice. So far as the customhouse and internal revenue office are concerned, any argument of convenience of the people is mere humbug. No one goes to the customhouse, for example, except a comparative few importers of foreign goods, and they deal to a large degree through customhouse brokers and clerks. The Irwin site is quite as convenient to the shipping part of town as the Mahuka site; it is nearer to the new wharves. It would be very disagreeable and inconvenient, from the standpoint of business interests, to have lower Fort street and Merchant street blocked with drays bringing goods from foreign steamers to the customhouse for appraisal. There is such a thing as having too central a position. Later herein will appear some further consideration of this point of centrality, in replying specially to some other arguments of the speaker.

Mr. Taylor, an architect who came here from Washington to consult about the matter, was cited by Mr. Castle as saying that he thought the Mahuka site ideal. He may have said that, in view of the circumstances of the occasion and time, some five or six years ago. But his views of the Irwin site were not mentioned. And under the conditions now and here, the intelligent leading men of the 5000 or 6000 people who have signed the petition for a change of site are quite as competent as Mr. Taylor to pass upon the three questions which he is quoted as having said to be fundamental: as to, first, the best interests of the community (for these 5000 citizens, voters, are the community, or a larger part of it than any body that has yet spoken, in a "representative meeting" or otherwise on the site question); as to, second, the desires of the business community (which is well represented on the petition of 5000); as to, third, the desires and requirements of the United States government (of which the officials at Washington have always preferred the Palace Square site, and of which the local officers are lined up almost, if not quite, to a man in favor of the Irwin property).

"The attempt in Washington to exchange the Mahuka site for another met with indignation." And rightly, too, yet not on account of the merits of the respective sites, but on account of the un-American, and unfair, methods of attempting to secure the change—methods comparable to an attorney's going to the judges of a court, secretly, with out notice to the other parties, and trying to get them to set aside their decision and render one in his favor. Such an attorney might have a case deserving a favorable decision, but his proper course would be to file motion for a rehearing, and give notice to all parties. The methods of attempted change were unfortunate and unworthy of a good cause; but the methods are not relevant here.

"The United States Government has made its choice." It made it, against the judgment of its officers as to the best site. But it has made its choice many times, and changed it, too, to the satisfaction of the large majority concerned.

Then, the speaker admits, that "We are not here to consider the best building site, but why the building site should be changed." That may be true. It looks as if it were true. That may be why he was there, why the Civic Federation as a body was there represented. But, the 5000 who signed the petition for a change, and who represent two-thirds of the voters, and two-thirds of the "thinking" men of the community, prefer to consider the question as to what is the best site, as well as the question whether if a better site is available, the present site should be changed. It was very evident, that the Civic Federation, professing to be disinterested, neutral body, lent itself to a partisan campaign meeting in the interests of the Mahuka site. This body of progressive citizens, pretending to act in the interests of a fair, 'even, and fair discussion, presented two speakers who are most active for the Mahuka site, one speaker who professed to speak fairly for the "civic center" idea, but who shortly before the meeting acknowledged his adherence to the "stand-pat" Mahuka contingent, and a fourth speaker who in fairness to his position as the people's representative in congress could only say, "I am your delegate, if you ever make up your mind, and work through the delegate whom you have chosen, I will follow the dictates of the people." The Civic Federation, which itself up to till the "common" people how to

run their political affairs in the interests of honest government and "clean politics," has given the "common" people as pretty an exhibition of "dirty politics" as this Territory, or any community has ever seen, all the while hypocritically professing to lend itself to the worthy object of a free, full, and fair discussion. The Civic Federation, having allowed two of the few speakers to urge the Mahuka site, while of the other two speakers, one was necessarily neutral and the other practically neutral, might in fairness have kept its own implied promise of neutrality and allowed at least one speaker for the 5000 petitioners. The fact, if the writer is correctly informed, that a request of one of the leaders of the 5000, for representation in the list of speakers, was denied, would seem further justification for characterizing these in control of the Civic Federation as perverters of the supposed principles of that body. Save for the few favorable words when President Griffiths spoke in introducing the speakers, the other parties in interest were left without a champion.

The signers "don't know their own minds." Let's keep to the point whether the site proposed is the best site. We didn't know our minds, should better be said, but we do now; or, our minds haven't changed but conditions have.

Good Practical Reasons.

The chamber of commerce and merchants' association favored the Fort street condemnation. Now, some are in doubt—I imagine because of sentiment in favor of those who lose property. What the merchants' association and the chamber of commerce think is, in any event, only persuasive—the views of men of more than ordinary intelligence and experience, leaders in the community, but whose views, for or against any proposition, must be measured with allowance for their selfish interests. But, the matter of direct question of sentiment, it is not necessary to predicate sympathy for the Fort street landholders upon any consideration of sentiment, when there are other good, practical reasons at hand. We decline to accept as the moving reason of the 5000 the sympathy which the speaker kindly ascribed to the two commercial associations. The chief reason for wishing to see the Fort street buildings remain, is an economic one: Why force a pure economic loss? Why should the government be compelled to spend \$300,000 or perhaps \$500,000 for the Fort street property, a large part of which it has forthwith to destroy, absolutely without return? Such initial payment means just too much money rendered unavailable for other use in the matter of a building and site—for the understanding of the writer is that the attitude of the treasury department is to cut down the expense of the building to meet the additional expense of site which would be made necessary by the Fort street extension. At all events, why destroy property, and put the Fort street people to the trouble and expense of rebuilding and moving, when a site which 5000 citizens, including many of our most intelligent leaders in all walks of life, regard as the best site is available?

Chance for Economy.

Right there is a good place to dispel the alarm over the feared economy of a Democratic congress in the matter of appropriation. If the Democrats want to be economical, they can save the government \$300,000 to \$500,000 by cutting out this Fort street condemnation, and afford to put an extra \$100,000 into beautifying the building. We may, also, here question whether there is any necessity for the Democratic congress taking any action at all. But despite the suggestions to the contrary, there need be no fear of "losing the whole thing, if we don't stop knocking the Mahuka site" (to use the words of another than the speaker). The appropriation for the federal building is a separate appropriation, without any condition as to location; and, some suggestions to the contrary notwithstanding, the appropriations for a site are also wisely left untied so far as location is concerned. Though the appropriations were made with the Mahuka site in view, there seems no doubt of the proposition that having been expensively made, they may be applied in any manner or any purpose within the object of a federal building, and would, undoubtedly, be applied as a considerable majority of the people desire.

The Grand Central Railway Station in New York City is hardly a helpful example in solving the question. Why shouldn't that station be left right where it is? The building and tracks and a large body of land are already there. A railway depot and courthouses are not comparable at all—one is of necessity a place of noise, so a noisy central site is immaterial. But in case of a courthouse, if centrality without noise can be had, it should be secured. It is not intended that the speaker urged the noisy site, but he used the example of the Grand Central depot, and we use the example with all its incidents to show its inaptness.

In citing the extension of the Grand Central station as an example of "enhancing the value of the property about," the speaker suggests, without intention, the possibility that a similar consideration has its influence in the excited interest which some of the Mahuka site adherents are taking in the question. If we should consider the enhancement in value brought about by a railway depot, we may also consider the absolute economic loss above mentioned (destruction of buildings for which the government gets no return) by a postoffice, which is almost always the dead-end place in town, where people go but from which they get away as soon as they can, invariably a place of dust and dirt and loafers—for the government is proverbially a poor housekeeper, especially in so difficult a place of housekeeping.

Who Uses the Building?

Mr. McCandless suggests that 60,000 of our population live the other side of Nuuanu avenue, while only 33,000 live this side. Maybe that is true. But, as we all know, the 33,000 this side of Nuuanu avenue do ten, twenty, perhaps a hundred, times more business at the postoffice, the courthouse, the customhouse, the internal revenue office than do the 60,000 aliens, plantation laborers and other laborers on the other side of Nuuanu avenue, many of whom never receive or send mail, and scarcely any of whom have any business at the customhouse unless brought there in custody of the United States marshal. In saying this the

writer intends no reflection on the 60,000, but it arouses his ire to see them used, and their professions needs used, in the cause of men who have their own interests in mind more than the interests of the down-country people, a good number of whom have their own local postoffices anyway, and who are so far away that, when in town, a minute's walk would make little difference. It should be remembered that the federal building is for growing Honolulu, not for the Honolulu of the past; and Honolulu is certainly growing toward Hilo.

Regarding Concessions.

"All concede the convenience of the Mahuka site; every way, that's the center." This conceding business seems to be all on one side. The Mahuka site people aren't conceding anything, not even that Honolulu is growing eastward, not even that the available building sites for business blocks now left largely Walkiki of Fort and Bishop streets, not even that the Irwin site is hardly a minute further away, not even that the Irwin site is a place central, open, comparatively free from noise and affording ample room for any number of postoffice loafers and federal court hangers-on, grand jury witnesses, et cetera, et cetera, and available without litigation and without destruction of valuable property, the payment for which would take just so much money away from what congress might otherwise spend in the matter. But, some of the Mahuka site adherents say, "We want to split up the town—it's too much on Fort street." Gentlemen, you may save your breath and your energy for something more important, more needed. That matter is being taken care of already; there are now no available business sites left on Fort street except at remote points, and no stores or rooms suitable for stores. The town will split itself up—its doing it every day. This argument only shows the lack of foresight of those who make it—they don't read the signs of the times; they are being carried along with the procession, but don't know it. This very argument of theirs shows their inconsistency, if it is not evidence of the disqualification of interest, as judges. They want to "break up the town," and they're doing their best job right in this very instance.

Civic Center Idea.

"This civic center idea is run into the ground." Perhaps the term "civic" is unfortunate. "Every building should be there," continues the speaker sarcastically; "the jail and the insane asylum" should be there. If these were fair examples in an argument, we might say of reply: The jail and asylum are already built; the federal building is not built, and other things being equal, may as well be built here in Palace Square as anywhere. And, as if he really believed in his line of argument, the speaker continues, "That opens the case to exceptions."

The Operahouse Objection.

"The Irwin site does not include the operahouse!" Why not? Who says so but you? Why can't you be fair? If the operahouse cannot be had by mutual agreement, it may be had by condemnation, the same as the Fort street buildings may be had, in time for the Mahuka site. But it is well known that the owner would be glad to dispose of the operahouse, which is an investment hardly pays insurance and taxes. Why should Judge Dole's letter be spoken of as his "alleged" letter. The speaker could easily find out that such a letter is in existence, and Judge Dole's just criticism of the Mahuka site as too noisy a place for a court is not disposed of by saying that the federal court in New York is in the postoffice building where there is much noise. The New York postoffice may not be favorably located, and, whatever its location, that location should not influence us in getting the best location, whatever it is. As a matter of fact the New York postoffice is now way downtown and the center of the metropolis is away, and growing further and further away from that postoffice every day. A postoffice site chosen a half century, or more, ago for a growing city like New York is not a fair example. In looking to New York city, for example, it would have been more fair to refer to more recently erected court buildings in quiet places, such as the court houses of the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court in Madison Square.

Stop Knocking.

The speaker concludes with an appeal to "stop knocking." "Who is knocking the building?" But we submit that to dispose of 5000 petitioners by epithets, whether of "knockers" or "site-shifters" or "five-cent signers," is merely to "make faces."

"The sooner we stop knocking, the sooner we get the building." So far as speedy realization is concerned, the argument for the Irwin site has much in its favor; no delays of litigation are imminent, few buildings would need to be removed, and they are buildings quickly removable.

Mr. Towse Marked Time.

Mr. Towse was asked by the Civic Federation, or some one, to speak for the civic center. He wasn't asked by the 5000 petitioners, or by any one representing them. His speech was fine, as eloquence, but he only "marked time," and got nowhere at the end. His reference to "the spirit of the law on contracts" showed he was a Mahuka site man. But lest we fail to dispose of every point for the Mahuka site, even when made by one who was speaking for the civic center, we may admit that the gift of \$35,000 was contractual, and still say that if the best interests of the community requires, they may receive that "just compensation," which the constitution secures them. It provides that property, and property rights, which include contracts, may be taken away in the interests of the people at large, and that their possession by any man shall not give him the balance of power in a public question. If a contractual ob-

jection arose because \$35,000 was given for the particular Mahuka site specified in the contract, one who spoke in favor of those who by their votes (as proved) made possible that particular Mahuka site, and no extended Mahuka site.

What Is the "Business Center?"

George W. Smith in opening his speech said that "the postoffice is the business center." What does that mean? Does it mean that it can not still be the business center and be situated at or near the Ewa end of Palace Square? Does it mean that it must be fairly convenient to all? These points have already been discussed above.

"We don't depend on carriers." We do not depend on postoffice employes carriers, to any extent—but we do depend on carriers in the sense of messengers and office boys, and we will, and any city must, more and more as the city grows. Any "business" man who don't depend on carriers and isn't so busy but that he can take the time to join the daily reunion of old pals at the postoffice, would surely have an extra minute to spare—and the walk would do him good. Mr. Smith must have taken one of his "degrees" at a country postoffice.

He speaks of the "necessities" of the case, in advertising to the removal of the Fort street buildings. But to say this is necessary and that we must destroy these buildings because necessary, is to beg the question. And a respectable number disagree with Mr. Smith on this question of necessity.

"The people go to the customhouse." How many? And who? "In Portland the postoffice is in the center of the business part of town." This is by no means true. It is faced on one side by a hotel, on the other by a line of drug stores, music stores, and clothing stores, a small bank and real estate offices, and immediately on the other by residences, a religious society building (Y. W. C. A., as we recall) and the residential section of town. The main banks and business houses are several blocks downtown. And now, just when, it is true, the business portion of Portland is growing toward the present postoffice, the government has, nearly a year ago, chosen a site for a new federal building several blocks still further away from the business center. The speaker also dwelt on the increase in property values in the vicinity of the Portland postoffice.

Home Rule Smack.

"We want the civic center particularly Hawaiian." This is an argument ad hominem, which might be expected of the old "Home Rule" party of ten years ago, but which would not influence any Hawaiian who is proud of being a federal citizen as well as a territorial citizen—and who isn't? "The federal building represents the United States." Yes, but you and Mr. Castle have been using the argument of the "people," the "people,"—meaning people of the United States presumably—with reference to this building. Now, you want to set it off the civic center map because it is not "particularly Hawaiian."

"This new thing has come up, I don't know why!" We leave you in the solitude of your thoughts. "I think it is a matter of sentiment." So did the first speaker. There are few who differ from you. "The main point is that we come together"—most of us are together—"come together, and dismiss it" (the petition for change). Coming together, then, means, coming your way, as the one jurymen wanted the "eleven unreasonable ones" to come his way. "Let's forget all this petition. The majority said, five years ago, we wanted the Mahuka site." But we are talking about now, and here, and the future.

"Let's drop it for the more important subjects of health and greater Honolulu." A woman whose husband, a war recruit, was going off to the Spanish War, said as the soldiers marched to the music proudly by, "Why, they're all out of step but me, Charlie!"

The will of the people, which Kubio desires for his guidance, will be expressed, has already been expressed in no uncertain way, and we shall be "together" as near as any community can ever hope to be together. And, we may say, we will not permit any impracticable third issue of a herring to be drawn across the path, even though it has as a Warwick Charlie Achi. We, the overwhelming majority of voters, have made up our minds. We always felt inclined to the Irwin site, but we needed someone to take the trouble to do the work of putting a petition in our hands for signature. For this initiative, the new federal building will be a monument to Jack Atkinson, who is the father of the civic center, as the Civic Federation has professed to be—and failed.

A MEMBER OF THE 100,000 CLUB.

TEST CASE OVER THE \$5000 FOR CUMMINS

The case of the remitting of the fee of John Cummins in the bill as passed by the legislature advanced a step yesterday when the attorney general filed his brief in connection with it.

The act passed by the legislature called for the sum of \$5000 to be paid over to John Cummins as a remittance of the fine which he paid to the Republic in former years. When Cummins applied for the money the auditor refused to hand it over, but decided to make a test case of it. Attorney-General Lindsay will defend the department when the matter comes up for consideration, and the case will be watched with unusual interest, as during the time the bill was pending there was talk of forming a precedent that would have to be acted upon by the next legislature.

FIRST AID.

During the warm weather, attacks of diarrhoea are very frequent and often are so swift in their results that life is in danger before a physician can be summoned. Every man who has the interests of his family at heart should keep a reliable remedy in his home for immediate use in cases of this kind. Chamberlain's Colic, Cholera and Diarrhoea Remedy is, without doubt, the best remedy prepared for diarrhoea. It should be given, if possible, at the first unusual looseness of the bowels. For sale by Rossen, Smith & Co., agents for Hawaii.